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Elmer Presbyterian Church

Trinity Sunday

Sunday, May 31, 2026

Scripture Reading: Matthew 28: 16-20

Sermon: Time to Go and Make Disciples

The Christmas message of the angels to the shepherds was that there was Good News! We like good news. We certainly don't like bad news.

A father came home from a very rugged day at work and said to his wife, "I've had a bad day. Please! If you have any bad news tonight, keep it to yourself." To which she replied, "O.K. NO bad news. Now for the Good News. Remember our four children? Well, three of them didn't break an arm today." We have Good News!!! We are commissioned to share it!

The Good News of the Great Commission is this reality, the people of God are SENT PEOPLE, no matter if the lost be across the street or on the other side of the planet. And if we are sent then the question of the day is, "How do we live out the Great Commission in our everyday lives?"

Let me give you an example of being sent to where you are presently. A pastor entered his local McDonalds in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and noticed a young man from his church who had recently graduated from Harvard with a master's degree. His name was Peter and he was working the counter. He managed to get him to break free for coffee together. "What are you doing here?" he asked, knowing that Harvard master's degree students don't usually aspire to work the counter at McDonald's. "Well," he explained, "I graduated in May, but I went four months without finding a job, so I said to myself, 'I need some income to pay bills.' So this is where I've ended up—at least for now." The pastor said to Peter, "Sorry to hear that. It must be hard," but Peter said. "No. Don't be sorry. God has me here. This place is giving me awesome opportunities to share my faith. I'm on a shift that includes a Buddhist guy from Sri Lanka, a Muslim fellow from Lebanon, a Hindu lady from India, and a fellow Christian from El Salvador. It's awesome. I get to be a global missionary to my coworkers while asking 'would you like fries with that?'" Peter found himself in a setting he never would have chosen as part of his long-term plan, but his mindset of living as

a sent person shaped the way he looked at his circumstances and at the people around him.

What an opportunity Peter saw in working at McDonalds... and what task we all have in this very lost world. God can use us right where we are to minister to those around us. He may call us to go to the ends of the earth or to our next door neighbor. The world we live in today demands that we see the wide open door for Great Commission cooperation that God has given us. We live in an age of mass migration of people. No longer is it the case that the "ends of the earth" means the other side of the planet. The "ends of the earth" are upon us today in the USA. We meet people from around the world right in our neighborhood, places we shop or our work place.

People everywhere need the Lord and need to know they are loved by God and forgiven. People need to know it isn't a works salvation. It is all about GRACE. People need to know that they are created by God and are unique and special and have a purpose in the world.

- As of 2022, there are approx. 8.3 billion people on Earth.
- There are 2.4 billion Christians who claim Jesus as Savior which is around 31%.
- 2.6% have heard the message of the Good News and haven't responded yet.
- Over 50% of the world's population have never heard the Gospel and have no real opportunity currently to hear it.
- There are 17,500 people groups in the world, and 1.5 billion people have no Bibles; no churches; no Christian Literature; and no missions agencies to share the Good News with them.

Notice that the Great Commission is sandwiched between The Great Affirmation and The Great Promise! The Great Affirmation contains those words of the risen Jesus as he goes ahead of his 11 disciples into Galilee. He says, ***"All authority in the universe has been given to me."***

Jesus is the Lord not just of the church, he is the Lord of history, he is the Lord of governments, he is the Lord of nations, he is the Lord of the universe; that is the statement, which is the affirmation that the early Christians made when they confessed at their baptism Jesus Christ is Lord.

It's more than just a personal statement, it's more than just a political statement; it's a cosmic statement of supreme and universal Lordship. And the Great Commission flows out of that great affirmation. It is because Jesus Christ, this crucified Jew, is the Lord of the nations, and that his followers, his disciples have a mission to the nations. Notice that word "therefore" links the Great Affirmation with the Great Commission.

The Great Promise is that the Lord Jesus will be with us, all the way to the end of this age!! So, Jesus has all the authority and power. He has called us to make disciples of all nations and He will always be with us!! But the Greek sheds light on the Great Commission.

Almost all our English Bible translations mislead us because they begin with the command "go." In Greek, the word "GO" is a present participle, which strictly speaking should be translated,

"Therefore, as you're going, make disciples of all nations." So, the emphasis is not on the going, it is on the making of disciples.

We are called to GO... but the main priority is to MAKE DISCIPLES! And how do we do that? Verse 20 in the Great Commission says this, "Teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you." So, what is it that Jesus has commanded them? Well, to find out we've got to go back in our Bibles to Matthew 5, because that is where the teaching ministry of Jesus begins. Matthew 5-8 is what we call the Sermon on the Mount. In the opening words of Matthew 5, Jesus gives us a description of the citizens of his kingdom. It is what we call the Beatitudes, Matthew 5:3-12, Jesus spells out the characteristics of those who belong to his Kingdom. Let's look at them as the way to live between Sundays in order to fulfill the Great Commission. We studied the Beatitudes recently and it is helpful to live following them.

The disciples would need God's Holy Spirit, for there was great work for them to do. They could not do it in their own strength. They needed God's power working through them, giving them the strength needed for such a difficult task.

What was this great work? When Jesus sent His twelve disciples out the first time, He gave them a commission, authority and power for a task. Jesus told them to preach, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 10:7).

When Jesus sent them out, "he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (Matthew 10:1).

Once again Jesus was giving His disciples a commission, but this time it was different. The first time the disciples were only sent to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:6), not to the Gentiles. Now Jesus was telling His disciples that they must "Go ye into all the world."

Jesus told His disciples to be "witnesses" and tell others all that they had seen and heard. He said that they were to "preach the gospel," the good news of salvation and to baptize people who believed in Jesus.

They were to begin this commission in Jerusalem, the nation's capital, then in all Judea, the southern kingdom, next in Samaria, the northern kingdom, and lastly in "the uttermost part of the earth," the rest of the world.

Jesus said that signs would follow His disciples to let people know that Jesus was leading them. Some of the signs were that they could cast out demons, they would speak in languages that they had never learned, and they would lay hands on the sick and they would get well. They would not go alone. They would have the Holy Spirit with them to guide them and empower them.

This Great Commission was not given to the disciples only. God wants every saved man, woman, boy, and girl to be "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:20). When Jesus was here on the earth, He was God's ambassador to all. He represented God and God's message. But since Jesus has returned to Heaven, God needs us to be His ambassadors to people who have not heard the Gospel message. It is up to us to tell them.

Survivor Eva Hart remembers the night, April 15, 1912, on which the Titanic plunged 12,000 feet to the Atlantic floor, some two hours and forty minutes after an iceberg tore a 300-foot gash in the starboard side: "I saw all the horror of its sinking, and I heard, even more dreadful, the cries of drowning people." Although twenty lifeboats and rafts were launched- only lifeboat No. 14 actually rowed back to the scene after the unsinkable ship slipped from sight at 2:20 A.M. Alone, it chased cries in the darkness, seeking and saving a precious few. Incredibly, no other boat joined it. All

the other lifeboats feared a rush of unknown swimmers who would cling to their craft, and eventually sink it.

"I came to seek and to save the lost," our Savior said. And he commissioned us to do the same. But we face a large obstacle: fear. While people drown in the treacherous waters around us, we are tempted to stay dry and make certain no one rocks the boat.

WE HAVE GOOD NEWS. We are the privileged vessel that God has chosen to share the Good News so others will live. And what is the power of the commission? This one statement, "And surely, I will be with you. I am with you. I'll be with you every step of the way." This is linked with Acts 1:8, "You'll receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you." And the Spirit of Christ is with us to the end of the age.

The participle "GO" carries the imperative force because it is followed by the imperative, "MAKE DISCIPLES". The Great Commission involves the church scattering, as you are going, for the furtherance of the gospel. Jesus' words convey intentionality. We deliberately "go, evangelize, and make disciples". This means we are to plan and strategize how best to reach a lost world for Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:13-15, "for 'WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.' How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, 'HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!'" (Isaiah 52:7).

When we go we are following the footsteps of our missionary God who came from heaven to earth to secure our salvation. When we send, we are following the example of Jesus who sends us out as the Father sent Him out.

Since we have experienced great things from God in our own salvation we can as the great Baptist missionary, William Carey, once preached, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God."

Let us look to Him today to overcome the barriers of materialism, fear, prejudice, individualism, and unbelief so that we may be about the Father's business of making disciples of all nations for His glory until He comes again.